

Omnibus

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1 INT./EXT. RAILWAY STATION - DAY

PANNING TILT SHOT OF RAILWAY STATION

Martichoux (Mid 30s) is wearing dark brown overcoat, black pants and dusty brown leather shoe. He ambles toward the station and carries a black office suitcase in his left hand, which he never moves as he walks. His pace steadily increases as he approaches the station.

He enters the busy station, walks over, picks up a Newspaper and gives exact change at the counter. He does all of this casually like a regular visitor.

MARTICHOUX
(Handing over the coin)
Good Morning.

COUNTER GIRL
Thank you.

ZOOM-IN OF THE STATION CLOCK AS IT HITS 9.07

2 INT. FIRST COMPARTMENT OF PASSENGER TRAIN - DAY

Station Announcer announces departure of the train after beep. Matrichoux wades through the compartment and finds an empty seat. Few kids and an Old Lady with loosely worn eye glasses too enter the sparsely crowded compartment. After the Flagman whistles and waves, train departs from the station.

LOW-ANGLE SHOT OF MOVING RAIL WHEEL SETS

WIDE SHOT OF THE FAST MOVING TWO-COMPARTMENT TRAIN

TICKET INSPECTOR
(Looking Martichoux)
Tickets, please.

The Old Lady is sitting next to Martichoux. He is so engrossed in solving the Newspaper puzzle that he doesn't even look up. He keeps his pen in his mouth and hands over the ticket to the Inspector almost as an involuntary action. Upon collecting the ticket, Inspector pauses for a second and checks backside of the ticket.

TICKET INSPECTOR (CONT'D)
You have the extra ticket to
Desvres?

MARTICHOUX
What was that?

TICKET INSPECTOR
Your ticket is for Cateau. This
train goes non-stop to Desvres. You
have the compliment?

Martichoux blandly looks at the Inspector.

TICKET INSPECTOR (CONT'D)
(Taking out the Report
slip)
You haven't got the extra ticket. I
will have to draw up an Official
Report.

MARTICHOUX
(Flexes his eyebrows
because of confusion)
But I get off at Cateau.

TICKET INSPECTOR
You cannot get off at Cateau. The
train is direct to Desvres.

MARTICHOUX
Isn't this the 9.06?
The 9.06 stops at Cateau. I take it
every day.

Martichoux looks at the Old Lady sitting next to him. She
nods her head in rejection, after which Martichoux looks
puzzled at the standing Inspector.

MARTICHOUX (CONT'D)
Don't tell me it's non-stop to
Desvres.
Later maybe, but this one stops.
I'm sure. I've been on it.

TICKET INSPECTOR
Perhaps you work in Cateau, but I
work on this train since January
second 1992. The 9.06 goes non-stop
to Desvres.

The Old Lady nods in acceptance and looks at Martichoux.

TICKET INSPECTOR (CONT'D)
It serves Chapeau Rouge,
Lambrecies, Avesne-sur-saine and
arrives at Saint Omer at 11.16.

The old lady nods in acceptance, looking upon which the Inspector smirks.

MARTICHOUX

January second 1992? That's today.

TICKET INSPECTOR

Yes it is. It's now.

(Filling out the Official
Report in hand)

That makes 115 francs 50 cents.

Cheque or Cash?

MARTICHOUX

You can't just change the
timetables like that. It's madness!
On the first maybe, but not on the
second.

(Turning towards the Old
Lady)

Don't you agree with me, Madame?

Not on the 2nd...

OLD LADY

It was posted on the notice board.

I checked. You should have looked
at it.

The Old Lady looks at the Inspector and raises her eyebrows signalling consensus, upon which the Inspector grins.

TICKET INSPECTOR

It's the 8.35 that stops at Cateau.

OLD LADY

(Smiling merrily)

Yes, yes.

TICKET INSPECTOR

At Desvres you can get a bus back.

MARTICHOUX

But it's... It's imperative that I
get off.

It can't be true.

Martichoux gets up, picks up his suitcase and overcoat from the top luggage rack and hurriedly looks at his wrist watch and gasps.

MARTICHOUX (CONT'D)

What time is it? It's a
catastrophe!

TICKET INSPECTOR
115 francs 50 cents.

MARTICHOUX
Yes, straight away.

Some co-passengers start to listen the conversation.
Martichoux hands over the money to the Inspector.

MARTICHOUX (CONT'D)
(Handing over the money to
the Inspector)
I need to talk to you.

Martichoux picks up his suitcase and signals the Inspector to
come aside for a private discussion. They both pull out as
few co-passengers look upon.

MARTICHOUX (CONT'D)
(Speaks erratically out of
tension)
Are you married?
I'm married, I have two little
ones. My marriage is rocky. This
work is vital. I'm within a hair's
breadth of losing my job.

It's Ricci. Ricci!

He can't stand me. It's like that,
he hates me. He gave me two
warnings. Even with the bus it
would take thirty minutes.
It's impossible! I'm going to be
sacked. He's like that. If I lose
my job, my wife will leave me.
She'll leave me!

A husband who's sitting and kissing his wife looks up. His
wife again turns his head towards her and continues kissing.
Also, now most of the co-passengers watch both Martichoux and
the Inspector.

MARTICHOUX (CONT'D)
(A drop glitters at his
eyes' edge and he
whimpers)
And my children... Have you thought
of them? Social services await
them. I have a mortgage I won't be
able to pay, a superb house in an
estate. A broken life.
(MORE)

MARTICHOUX (CONT'D)
Two hateful parents-in-law, who
will want custody of the children.

Train whizzes past a green pasture. The Inspector seems emotionally moved but looks helpless.

MARTICHOUX (CONT'D)
I beg you. Let me get off at
Cateau-Cambresis.
I'll do it quickly. No one will
see.

Martichoux and Inspector look each other. As co-passengers look upon, the Inspector seems further moved.

MARTICHOUX (CONT'D)
My life is on the line.
Please, Cateau-Cambresis.

TICKET INSPECTOR
(Faltering)
I can't do anything sir.
I can't stop this train.

The Inspector looks at the onlooking passengers and faces Martichoux with regret. Martichoux looks as though he is about to break down.

TICKET INSPECTOR (CONT'D)
It's not possible. Pull yourself
together, sir.
I'll take you to see Errol. You can
sort it out with him.

MARTICHOUX
Errol?

TICKET INSPECTOR
Yes, the Driver. But I'm not
promising you anything.

Come on. Let's go.

Martichoux composedly closes his eyes for a moment. Co-passengers bend their heads so that they can see Martichoux and the Inspector proceed to meet the Driver.

Both arrive at the Driver's door and Inspector opens the door.

TICKET INSPECTOR (CONT'D)
(Holding the door)
Errol, I've someone to see you.

MARTICHOUX
Mister Errol?

Errol is jubilant and ecstatically hums a song. He is shaking his head and moving his fingers in accordance with the tune.

ERROL
(In an excited tone)
Ah, it's beautiful, eh?

The Inspector closes back the door and stretches his uniform. Most passengers in the first compartment gather around the Old Lady and listen to her.

OLD LADY
I work in Briniou. The train
doesn't stop there, but I know it.
Knowing it is enough.

*WIDE ANGLE DOLLY SHOT WHICH MOVES ALONGSIDE AND TOWARDS THE
DRIVER CABIN, INSIDE WHICH MARTICHOUX IS EXPLAINING TO ERROL*

3 INT. DRIVER CABIN - DAY

ERROL
I can't do anything for you. They
check up on me.

MARTICHOUX
(After a brief pause
thinking)
Ah, I get it. You don't help a
person out when you have job
security?

ERROL
I can't do anything against
electronics. That's all.

MARTICHOUX
The world could die at your feet,
but you will stay on the tracks?
It's sad.

Errol turns and sounds annoyed as though he didn't clearly hear what Martichoux said.

MARTICHOUX (CONT'D)
It's sad!

ERROL
(Shrugs his shoulders)
I can't stop.

Errol blows the train horn.

MARTICHOUX
Please... Cateau-Cambresis.

Both exchange looks. Errol looks at Martichoux as though he's judging him by looking through him.

MARTICHOUX (CONT'D)
Please!

ERROL
(After thinking briefly)
I can't stop, but I can slow down.

MARTICHOUX
Sorry?

ERROL
You can run?

MARTICHOUX
I did 13.04 seconds with Claye-Souilly club.

ERROL
If all goes well, you'll prove it.
You'll do exactly what I say.

3 SHOTS OF TRAIN ADVANCING AT STEADY SPEED

Errol starts adjusting the lever in Electronics panel.

ERROL (CONT'D)
Start the countdown. We'll start at
50.

Martichoux is excited by this unexpected offer and puts on his overcoat.

MARTICHOUX
I'm ready.

ERROL
You want to kill yourself? I said
at 10 kilometer per hour. The speed
of a bicycle.

MARTICHOUX
I've never jumped from a bicycle.

WIDE SHOT OF TRAIN STARTING TO SLOW DOWN

ERROL
Forty!

Martichoux picks up his suitcase and is standing near the Exit door beside the Driver Cabin.

ERROL (CONT'D)
Thirty Five!

Martichoux opens the Exit door and looks outside. Errol further adjusts the lever in Electronics panel.

ERROL (CONT'D)
Thirty!

TOP-ANGLE WIDE SHOT OF THE SLOWING TRAIN APPROACHING CATEAU STATION

ERROL (CONT'D)
Okay?

MARTICHOUX
Yes. Very good.

Martichoux steps down to the second step beneath the Exit door. The train has almost reached the Station Platform.

ERROL
Twenty!

Martichoux is anxious as the train has reached the station, and on a spur of moment jumps from the step. He awkwardly lands running on the Platform.

Errol leaps from his seat and looks through his side window.

ERROL (CONT'D)
(Worriedly shouts)
No !!!

Martichoux now steadies himself by slowing down along the platform.

MARTICHOUX
(Shouting towards Errol)
If you need me, my name is
Martichoux.

Errol is relieved and shows thumbs-up to Martichoux.

ERROL
(Loudly)
Okay.

A PASSENGER IN THE FIRST COMPARTMENT
Look!

Passengers in the First Compartment look through the window in excitement. Upon seeing Martichoux running in the platform, few of them stand up, applaud and cheer for him. Martichoux bids them Good-bye.

4 INT. PASSENGER TRAIN SECOND COMPARTMENT - DAY

Out-of-nowhere a hand from the second compartment suddenly appears and pulls the slowing down Martichoux back into the train.

A PASSENGER IN THE SECOND COMPARTMENT
(With a happy smile and
great satisfaction as
though he had done a great
deal of service)

Good for you. You didn't miss it!

A perplexed Martinchoux looks at the random passenger with utter shock. His hands are up and mouth is wide open.

*FAST ZOOM-OUT OF THE SLOW-MOVING TRAIN'S REAR AS IT LEAVES
THE CATEAU STATION*